

§ 2901.1

7 CFR Ch. XXIX (1–1–98 Edition)

AUTHORITY: Secs. 502, 507, Pub. L. 95–621, 92 Stat. 3397, 3405, Nov. 9, 1978.

SOURCE: 44 FR 55803, Sept. 28, 1979, unless otherwise noted.

§ 2901.1 Purpose and scope.

The purpose of this part 2901 is to provide procedures for the making of certain adjustments to the Secretary of Agriculture's Essential Agricultural Uses and Requirements regulations in accordance with section 502(c) of the Natural Gas Policy Act of 1978, in order to prevent special hardship, inequity, or an unfair distribution of burdens. The procedures in this part 2901 apply to any person seeking an interpretation of, modification of, rescission of, exception of, or exemption from the Essential Agricultural Uses and Requirements regulations in part 2900 of this chapter.

§ 2901.2 Definitions.

(a) *Person* means any individual, firm, sole proprietorship, partnership, association, company, joint venture or corporation.

(b) *Director* means the Director of the Office of Energy, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

(c) *Secretary* means the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

(d) *Adjustment* means an interpretation, modification, rescission of, exception to or exemption from the Essential Agricultural Uses and Requirements regulations, part 2900 of this chapter.

(e) *NGPA* means the Natural Gas Policy Act of 1978, Pub. L. 95–621.

(f) *Petitioner* means any person seeking an adjustment under this part 2901.

§ 2901.3 Oral presentation.

Any person seeking an adjustment under this part 2901 shall be given an opportunity to make an oral presentation of data, views and arguments in support of the request for an adjustment, provided that a request to make an oral presentation is submitted in writing with the request for the adjustment. An official of the Department of Agriculture shall preside at such oral presentation.

§ 2901.4 Interpretations.

(a) *Request for an interpretation.* (1) Any person seeking an interpretation of the Essential Agricultural Uses and Requirements regulations in part 2900 shall file a formal written request with the Director. The request should contain a full and complete statement of all relevant facts pertaining to the circumstances, act or transaction that is the subject of the request and to the action sought, and should state the special hardship, inequity, or unfair distribution of burdens that will be prevented by the interpretation sought and why the interpretation is consistent with the purposes of NGPA. The Director shall publish a notice in the FEDERAL REGISTER advising the public that a request for an interpretation has been received and that written comments will be accepted with respect thereto, if received within 20 days of the notice. The FEDERAL REGISTER notice will provide that copies of the request for interpretation from which confidential information has been deleted in accordance with paragraph (a)(2) of this section may be obtained from the petitioner.

(2) If the petitioner wishes to claim confidential treatment for any information contained in the request or other documents submitted under this part 2901, such person shall file together with the document a second copy of the document from which has been deleted the information for which such person wishes to claim confidential treatment. The petitioner shall indicate in the original document that it is confidential or contains confidential information and may file a statement specifying the justification for non-disclosure of the information for which non-disclosure is sought. The Director shall consider such requests, and subject to the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. 552 and other applicable laws and regulations, shall treat such information as confidential.

(b) *Investigations.* The Director may initiate an investigation of any statement in a request and utilize in his evaluation any relevant facts obtained in such investigation. The Director may accept submissions from third persons relevant to any request for interpretation provided that the petitioner

is afforded an opportunity to respond to all such submissions. In evaluating a request for interpretation, the Director may consider any other source of information.

(c) *Applicability.* Any interpretation issued hereunder shall be issued on the basis of the information provided on the request, as supplemented by other information brought to the attention of the Director during the consideration of the request. The interpretation shall, therefore, depend for its authority on the accuracy of the factual statement and may be relied upon only to the extent that the facts of the actual situation correspond to those upon which the interpretation was based.

(d) *Issuance of an interpretation.* Upon consideration of the request for interpretation and other relevant information received or obtained by the Director, the Director may issue a written interpretation. A copy of the written interpretation shall be provided to FERC and the Secretary of Energy. Notice of the issuance of the written interpretation shall be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER. The granting of a request for issuance of an interpretation shall be considered final agency action for purposes of judicial review under § 2901.8.

(e) *Denial of an interpretation.* An interpretation shall be considered denied for purpose of review of such denial under § 2901.7 only if:

(1) The Director notifies the petitioner in writing that the request is denied and that an interpretation will not be issued; or

(2) The Director does not respond to a request for an interpretation, by (i) issuing an interpretation, or (ii) giving notice of when an interpretation will be issued within 45 days of the date of receipt of the request, or within such extended time as the Director may prescribe by written notice within the 45-day period.

(f) For purposes of this part 2901 the word *interpretation* shall not be deemed to include a simple clarification of an actual or purported ambiguity in part 2900. The Director reserves the right to determine whether a request involves simple clarification and shall advise the requester of his decision.

§ 2901.5 Modifications and rescissions.

(a) *Request for modification or rescission.* (1) Any person seeking a modification or a rescission of the Essential Agricultural Uses and Requirements regulations of part 2900 shall file a formal written request with the Director. The request shall contain a full and complete statement of all relevant facts pertaining to the circumstance, act or transaction that is the subject of the request and to the action sought. The request should state the special hardship, inequity or unfair distribution of burdens that will be prevented by making the modification or rescission.

(2) If the petitioner wishes to claim confidential treatment for any information contained in the request or other documents submitted under this part 2901, such person shall file together with the document a second copy of the document from which has been deleted the information for which such person wishes to claim confidential treatment. The petitioner shall indicate in the original document that it is confidential or contains confidential information and may file a statement specifying the justification for non-disclosure of the information for which non-disclosure is sought. The Director shall consider such requests, and subject to the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. 552 and other applicable laws and regulations, shall treat such information as confidential.

(3) The request shall be filed as a petition for rulemaking and treated in accordance with the procedures, as applicable, of 7 CFR part 1, subpart B.

(b) *Institution of rulemaking.* Upon consideration of the request for modification or rescission and other relevant information received or obtained by the Director, the Director may institute rulemaking proceedings in accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act 5 U.S.C. 551 *et seq.* and applicable regulations.

(c) *Denial of a modification or rescission.* If the Director (1) denies the request for modification or rescission in writing by notifying the petitioner that he does not intend to institute rulemaking proceedings as proposed and stating the reasons therefor, or (2) does not respond to a request for a